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of governments in our times. Had there been any interference, either by the ecclesiastical authority, or by the police, as many rash persons desired; the blasphemous and ridiculous absurdities of that woman might have taken deep root, and occasioned lasting mischief. Her followers consisted of tens, some said hundreds of thousands; among them were some clergymen, and many persons of property; all these would have cried out, if government had interfered, and the impostor herself would have been canonized in the belief of her stupid votaries. The extent of the delusion, in times like these, when information is so widely spread, may moderate our censures of our ancestors, who were placed under circumstances so widely different.

In Mr. Calef's observations on the Rev. Dr. Mather's life of Sir W. Phips, there are some interesting particulars of the manner in which the new charter was obtained from the King, the old one having been resumed by a *quo warranto*.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NORTH-AMERICAN JOURNAL.

Sir,

The uncommon weather which we have experienced since May last, and the late appearances in the sun having excited an unusual degree of attention to meteorological observations, the following paper may probably be interesting to a considerable portion of your readers.

There might be some hesitation in repeating the narrative of such singular and unexplained phenomena, were it not for the respectable source from which the information is derived. M. Acharius is a gentleman of scientific eminence, whose name and reputation are well known, and his communication has a place in the collections of a respectable literary society, of which he is a member. The translation of his paper, which has been obligingly presented to me by Mr. Hauff, is transmitted to you for publication, if you should consider it an acceptable contribution to your valuable miscellany. Some of your readers, perhaps, may be induced to compare the account given by M. Acharius, with

analogous facts recorded or observed, and it would be gratifying to receive any satisfactory views, which may occur in explanation of the asserted phenomena. A. X.

Boston, Sept. 12, 1816.



ACCOUNT OF AN EXTRAORDINARY METEORIC PHENOMENON; BY
E. ACHARIUS.

[From the Transactions of the Swedish Academy of Sciences, for 1808, page 215.
Translated by Mr. J. C. Hauff.]

HAVING received intelligence from several persons, although differently and variously related, of an extraordinary and probably hitherto unseen Phenomenon, which was observed in the air last month, at and about the village of Biskopsberga, near the Town of Skeninge, which accounts not being testified to me by eye-witnesses, nor agreeing as to facts and circumstances, I resolved to proceed to the place myself for obtaining an exact and detailed account thereof; and as I find so many singular circumstances attending this Meteor, which deserve to be known, I have thought it my duty to communicate them to the Royal Academy, and thereby to save so remarkable an occurrence from oblivion, which, although difficult to explain, still affords an additional proof of those many wonderful operations of Nature, which take place in our Atmosphere.

On the 16th of last May, being a very warm day, and during a gale of wind from south-west, and a cloudless sky, at about 4 o'clock, P. M. the sun became dim, and lost his brightness to that degree, that he could be looked at without inconvenience to the naked eye, being of a dark-red, or almost brick colour, without brilliancy. At the same time there appeared at the western horizon, from where the wind blew, to arise gradually, and in quick succession, a great number of balls, or spherical bodies, to the naked eye of a size of the crown of a hat, and of a dark brown colour. The nearer these bodies, which occupied a considerable though irregular breadth of the visible heaven, approached towards the sun, the darker they appeared, and in the vicinity of the sun, became entirely black. At this elevation their course seemed to lessen, and a great many of them remained, as it were, stationary; but they soon resumed their former, and an accelerated motion, and passed in the same

direction with great velocity and almost horizontally. During this course some disappeared, others fell down, but the most part of them continued their progress almost in a straight line, till they were lost sight of at the eastern horizon. The phenomenon lasted uninterruptedly, upwards of two hours, during which time millions of similar bodies continually rose in the west, one after the other irregularly, and continued their career exactly in the same manner. No report, noise, nor any whistling or buzzing in the air was perceived. As these balls slackened their course on passing by the sun, several were linked together, three, six, or eight of them in a line, joined like chain-shot by a thin and straight bar; but on continuing again a more rapid course, they separated, and each having a tail after it, apparently of three or four fathoms length, wider at its base where it adhered to the ball, and gradually decreasing, till it terminated in a fine point. During the course, these tails which had the same black colour as the balls, disappeared by degrees.

It fortunately happened, that some of these balls fell at a short distance, or but a few feet from Mr. Secretary K. G. Wettermark, who had then for a long while been attentively looking at the phenomenon, in the aforesaid village. On the descent of these bodies, the black colour seemed gradually to disappear the nearer they approached the earth, and they vanished almost entirely till within a few fathoms distance from the ground, when they again were visible with several changing colours, and in this particular exactly resembling those air-bubbles, which children use to produce from soapsuds by means of a reed. When the spot, where such a ball had fallen, was immediately after examined, nothing was to be seen, but a scarcely perceptible film or pellicle, as thin and fine as a cobweb, which was still changing colours, but soon entirely dried up and vanished. As somewhat singular, it may be observed, that the size of these balls, to the sight, underwent no particular change; for they appeared of the same dimension, at their rise from the western horizon, as well as on their passing by the sun, and during the whole of their course to the eastern part of the heavens, where they disappeared.

Such have been the real circumstances attending this phenomenon, to which all the people in the village can testify. I have drawn up this report from the accounts of none

but eye witnesses, and have compared them one with the other ; and I cannot doubt the truth of the incidents, having been related to me in a manner agreeing in particulars and details. The labourers of Peter Manson, a farmer, being at work in the field, were the first who observed the phenomenon, and as it continued so long, all the people in the village were gradually observing it ; it therefore could not be an illusion, possibly affecting one or other individual.

I leave it to the genius of more skilful and able men, to unfold the causes of this occurrence ; but as an hypothesis may be hazarded, without being censured, it may be supposed, that perhaps a strong gust of wind, (*coup de vent*) from some mountainous or woody tracts, or regions at a distance, had loosened, collected and carried along with it, some probably vegetable substances of a jelly-like nature, which, in passing through the air, having incorporated some additional matter by a chemical union therewith, formed themselves into thin globular masses, or by the effect of the air and wind, were formed into bubbles, which became perceptible to the eye by the sun's light. But, why did the sun lose his brightness ? and how could this innumerable quantity of such a soapy and jellied substance, be generated or produced in one place ?

July 15th, 1808.



FOR THE NORTH-AMERICAN JOURNAL.

SIR,

You have already noticed Taylor's Sermons lately republished here, but I request you to print the enclosed extract, from the sermon preached at the funeral of the Lord Primate. I have read these sermons with such delight, that I think the attention of the publick should be called towards them, till these admirable efforts of genius and piety are universally known.

To the Editor.

“ Presently it came to pass, that men were no longer ashamed of the cross, but it was worn upon breasts, printed in the air, drawn upon foreheads, carried upon banners, put upon crowns imperial ; presently it came to pass, that the